

ANZCCART Position Statement on H5N1 Avian Influenza (H5 bird flu)

Last updated 21 July 2026

The first confirmed cases of infection with the H5N1 strain of avian influenza (H5 bird flu) on mainland Australia were reported in June 2026. All these cases were in birds and so far, the number of cases is low.

While this strain of flu virus is different to the one that causes seasonal flu in humans, and the current risk to people in Australia is considered low¹, it has caused widespread mortalities in non-human animal populations in other countries. Most affected are birds and marine mammals but there have also been cases in certain species of domestic and wild land-based mammals².

ANZCCART does not provide advice or information on H5 bird flu since this lies outside its role. All enquiries relating to H5 bird flu should be directed to sources such as those listed below.

However, one of [ANZCCART's key objectives](#) is to provide a neutral forum for informed discussion of ethical and scientific issues relating to the use of animals in research.

While **ANZCCART does not conduct or fund animal research**, aspects of the global response to H5 bird flu fit within ANZCCART's objectives because it has involved – and is likely to continue to involve – the use of animals in research directed towards improved diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Some of this research may have the potential to advance the validation of methods that could reduce or replace the use of animals in certain areas of research.

Should you wish to share ideas for discussing the use of animals in H5 bird flu research within the scope of ANZCCART's objectives, please feel free to contact us at anzccart@adelaide.edu.au.

Further information:

1. [Bird flu \(avian influenza\)](#). Australian Centre for Disease Control. Accessed 21 July 2026.
2. [About bird flu](#). Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Accessed 21 July 2026.
3. [Report suspected bird flu](#). Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Accessed 21 July 2026.
4. [H5 bird flu](#). Wildlife Health Australia. Accessed 21 July 2026.